



STUDENT TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP) PROGRAM INFORMATION

U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Missoula, Montana 59807

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Q. What is the Student Temporary Employment Program?

A. This program provides an excellent opportunity for students to earn income to support their education, gain work experience and acquire job skills. Students have the opportunity to learn about the Forest Service, establish agency contacts and demonstrate personal potential. Many students are utilized on projects or activities related to their academic major. Students also gain insight into academic courses it would be beneficial for them to take.

Q. What types of work are students hired for?

A. The Forest Service is responsible for managing nearly 200 million acres of publicly-owned lands. Our mission is to "Care for the Land and Serve the People". We manage a multitude of resources for the benefit of many different segments of the public and are concerned with resources. We utilize students as aids and technicians to assist agency personnel and work in the fields of engineering, wildlife, fisheries, timber, range, fire, recreation, wilderness, and other natural resource management activities.

Q. What type of career opportunities are available with the Forest Service?

A. The Forest Service offers exciting career opportunities in forestry, range, soil science, wildlife biology, engineering, landscape architecture, accounting, geology, hydrology, range, fisheries, public affairs, mining engineering, recreation, land surveying, ecology, botany, entomology, human resources, contracting, archeology and other fields. Working in the Student Temporary Employment Programs can provide you with a better understanding of these careers.

Q. What academic degree programs do you recruit students from?

A. Most positions are filled by students enrolled in baccalaureate, graduate or other professional degree programs. In some cases high school, associate, vocational/technical students may be recruited.

Q. What academic majors do you recruit?

A. Positions are filled with students majoring in a variety of academic fields including: Fisheries Biology, Wildlife Biology, Botany, Ecology, Forestry, Range Science, Hydrology, Geology, Civil Engineering, Soil Science, Business Administration, Accounting, Landscape Architecture, Archeology and others.

Q. Would I have to be majoring in one of the above fields to be considered?

A. Not necessarily. While we often look for students with specific academic majors, we have positions where students in any major could be utilized.

Q. How many temporary student positions do you fill?

A. This varies depending on budget and work needs. At the peak of the field season approximately 500 students may be working under this program in the Northern Region of the Forest Service.

Q. Do you have any programs for students that lead to career positions with your agency?

A. Yes. Students who are selected and successfully complete the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) are provided with an opportunity to move into career positions. (For further information about this program contact any of the listed offices.)

Q. Do you have other programs that utilize students?

A. Yes. Students can apply or respond to any vacancy announcement. Students are also sometimes used as volunteers. Students interested in volunteer opportunities can contact any Forest Service Office.

Q. How can I get academic credit for paid or volunteer work experience?

A. Students who desire college credit for work experience are responsible for making arrangements with school officials, notifying their supervisor of any required materials or evaluation forms, and providing copies of any student reports.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY:

Q. Do you have to be a U.S. citizen?

A. No. Under this program students from allied and certain other countries may be employed provided they have been issued an appropriate authorization. If you are a foreign student you should contact your campus Foreign Student or career services office concerning Visas or other work authorization.

Q. Is there a minimum age requirement?

A. You must be at least 16 years of age. (Note: The minimum age for firefighting and other field positions is 18.)

Q. Are there any physical requirements?

A. Most field positions involve arduous physical activity at elevations up to 10,000 feet or more. Individuals interested in these position should begin a strenuous aerobic and strength conditioning program 8 to 10 weeks prior to reporting for work. Individuals selected for firefighting positions are required to have a medical examination and pass a work capacity test.

Q. If I'm not a student now would I be eligible?

A. To qualify for this program you must have student status. This includes applicants who are transferring or have been accepted for post-secondary education.

Q. Do I have to be a full-time student?

A. No. However, students must be taking at least a half-time course load. A half-time load is usually defined as a minimum of 6 semester hours.

Q. Is there a grade point average requirement?

A. Students must be in good academic standing (**cannot be on Academic Probation**) as defined by the academic institution they are attending.

Q. Are high school students or students in vocational programs eligible for this program?

A. Yes. However, the majority of positions are filled by college-level students.

Q. Do you require academic transcripts?

A. Yes. Students are required to provide a copy of their transcripts or other proof of enrollment when applying for a position. In addition, selected students are required to provide a copy of their academic transcript and course registration each school term.

Q. Can I continue to work in this program after graduation?

A. Not unless you have been accepted to an advanced degree program or otherwise continuing your education.

Q. What determines if I'm qualified for a position?

A. Work experience and education determines if you meet the qualification requirements for the position being filled.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Q. If I am hired, when would I start work?

A. Most work begins around mid-May or early June and lasts through August or mid-September. Some opportunities are available for students to work while attending school. Work schedules may be full-time, part-time, or a combination of both.

Q. How would my hours be determined if I had the opportunity to work while attending school?

A. The type of work, workloads, priorities, student availability, class schedules and several other factors have to be considered when developing work schedules. Students and supervisors are encouraged to jointly develop work schedules which meet work needs and doesn't adversely impact the student's studies (usually not more than 20 hours per week).

Q. What expectations do you have of students?

A. A lot! Students are expected to demonstrate hard work, initiative, dependability, responsibility, punctuality, a positive attitude, adaptability, interest, diligence, communication skills, organization skills, interpersonal skills and be a team player. The ability to live and work with individuals of varied backgrounds is essential.

Q. Can I work at the same location as one of my relatives under this program?

A. It depends. You can work in the same agency with a relative when there is no direct reporting relationship and the relative is not in a position to influence or control the student's appointment, promotion or advancement.

Q. Under what circumstances could my employment be terminated?

A. Possible examples include but are not limited to the following:

- ☒ withdrawal, suspension or expulsion from school;
- ☒ placement on academic probation, or failure to maintain acceptable academic status;
- ☒ unsatisfactory work performance or conduct;
- ☒ failure to enroll or satisfactorily complete a half-time credit schedule;
- ☒ completion of education;
- ☒ lack of work, funds or reorganization; or
- ☒ other work related reasons, (i.e., inability to meet work requirements).

PAY & BENEFITS:

Q. What's the pay and benefits?

A. Earnings	Earnings vary from approximately \$9 to nearly \$12 per hour. The rate of pay is based on the duties and responsibilities assigned and qualifications required to do the work. Students are paid every 2 weeks.
Paid Holidays	You would be paid for all legal holidays within your work schedule.
Sick Leave	Students working full-time earn 4 hours of paid sick leave every two weeks. When in part-time status, students earn 1 hour for every 20 hours worked.
Annual Leave	Students who are employed for 90 days or more earn 1 hour of paid annual leave for every 20 hours worked in part-time status or 4 hours every 2 weeks when in full-time status.
Transportation	Transportation to and from the point of hire is the responsibility of the student unless specifically provided for by national, regional or other recruitment initiatives.
Housing	Government quarters (bunkhouses) are sometimes available. Employees are charged a low fee per day for use of these facilities.
Incentives	Pay incentives and cash award systems are available for supervisors to recognize employee performance, special acts, and service.
Health Insurance	Students aren't generally entitled for health benefits unless they have been continuously employed for a year without a break in service exceeding 5 days. Students who meet this requirement may enroll in health benefit programs, but they have to pay the employee and government share.
Life Insurance	Students in this program are not eligible for government life insurance.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND HOW TO APPLY:

Q. When is the best time for a student to start looking for employment opportunities?

A. While inquiries may be made at any time, we recommend that students contact Units regarding summer employment opportunities from January through March.

Q. Where are the jobs located & who should I contact?

A. Jobs are located in the Regional Office Headquarters, 13 National Forests/Grasslands, and 62 Ranger Districts throughout Montana, North Dakota, and Northern Idaho. Students should contact personnel offices for those locations where they desire to work. See the contacts listed below.

Northern Region National Forests/Grasslands

National Forests/Grasslands: MONTANA

Personnel Offices/Addresses:

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| ❖ Beaverhead-Deerlodge Nat'l Forest, Dillon, MT | USDA, Forest Service, Personnel Office |
| ❖ Custer National Forest, Billings, MT | PO Box 130, Bozeman, MT 59771 |
| ❖ Gallatin National Forest, Bozeman, MT | Ph 406 587-6755 or 406-587-6959 |
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| ❖ Bitterroot National Forest, Hamilton, MT | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office
1801 N 1st St, Hamilton, MT 59840 |
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 | |
| ❖ Flathead National Forest, Kalispell, MT | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office
1935 Third Ave. E, Kalispell, MT 59901 |
|
 | |
| ❖ Helena National Forest, Helena, MT | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office |
| ❖ Lewis & Clark Nat'l Forest, Great Falls, MT | 2880 Skyway Dr., Helena, MT 59601 |
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| ❖ Kootenai National Forest, Libby, MT | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office
1101 US Highway 2 West, Libby, MT 59923 |
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| ❖ Lolo National Forest, Missoula, MT | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office
Bldg 24, Ft. Missoula, Missoula, MT 59804
Ph 406 329-3785 or 406-329-3789 |
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| ❖ Northern Region Headquarters, Missoula, MT | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office
Federal Bldg, PO Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807 |

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| ❖ Clearwater National Forest, Orofino, ID | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office |
| ❖ Idaho Panhandle National Forest, Coeur d'Alene, ID | 12730 Highway 12, Orofino, ID 83544 |
| ❖ Nez Perce National Forest, Grangeville, ID | Ph 208 476-8393 |

NORTH/SOUTH DAKOTA

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| ❖ Dakota Prairie Grasslands, Bismarck, ND | USDA Forest Service, Personnel Office
2880 Skyway Dr, Helena, MT 59601 |
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Q. What application materials should I provide?

A. All units in Region One will require the following:

- Application: Form OF-612 or Resume. If using a resume, it MUST include the following information: social security number, veterans' preference (if claiming), all work experience (with start and end dates using month/year), education, training, self development, awards, commendations, outside activities, and other information relevant to the target occupation.
- Student Temporary Pre-Employment Information Sheet
- A copy of your current transcript

Both form OF-612 and the Student Temporary Pre-Employment Information Sheet are available electronically at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r1/jobs>

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

Applicants with disabilities will receive consideration for reasonable accommodations in the hiring process for any physical, mental, or emotional impairment. Applicants should submit requests for reasonable accommodation with their application and provide supporting medical documentation. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis. Reasonable accommodation contact is: Margie Irvine at 406-329-3170.